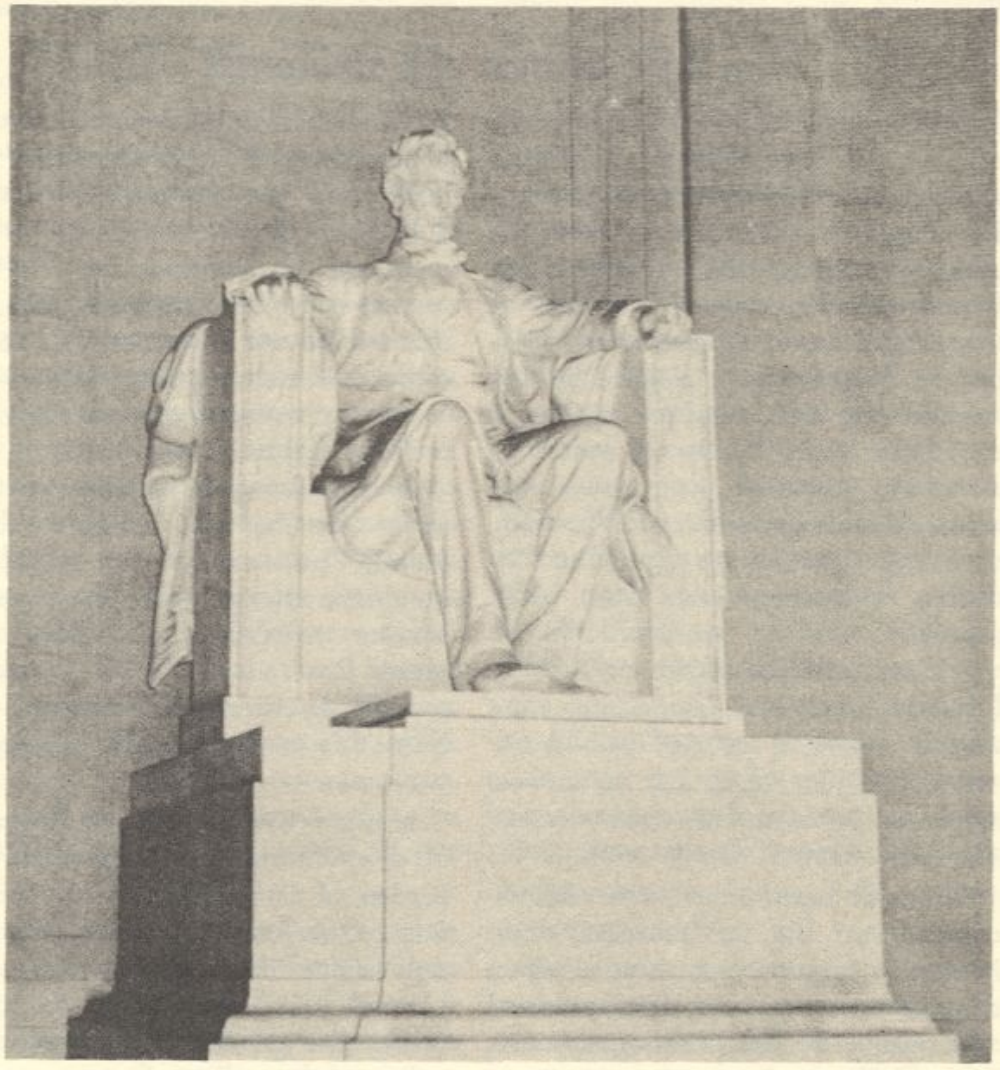
# RESTORATION REVIEW



THE WISDOM OF LINCOLN

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our cause is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

See "DRAMA IN LIFE OF LINCOLN" page 89

**Volume 10, No. 5** **May, 1968**

**Volume 10, No. 5** **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **May 1968**

## A NEW CRITERIA FOR SOUNDNESS

The word is about to get the best of me, so I just must say something about it, as a kind of catharsis if nothing else. One advantage in being an editor is that one can write away his frustrations, but only at the risk of imposing them upon his readers. Maybe you also have been plagued by that strange term that is unique in Church of Christ lingo. I refer of course to soundness. Only we have *sound* and *unsound* things, and, strangely enough, such language is always applied to conditions within our own ranks. ACC may be *sound* or *unsound,* but we would not evaluate Baylor or Vanderbilt that way. The *Gospel Advocate* may be *sound* to some of us and *unsound* to others of us, but none of us would refer to the *Baptist Standard* or the *Presbyterian Life* that way.

Whoever heard of an *unsound* Episcopal priest? But our preachers often have this opprobrium heaped upon them. Even song books, Sunday School material, books for libraries, sermons, Bible Chairs, programs of various sorts are at various times evaluated in terms of soundness. But it is always *our* song books and *our* sermons that are so dubbed. A Baptist song book or sermon may be sectarian, but for some reason it is never *unsound.* Just why this is I do not know, unless it is that other folk don't count with us the same way that our own do. We have our own fightin' words for home folk!

It is amusing if you stop to think about it. To ask "Is Paul Tillich sound?" has a strange ring indeed, and no doubt the religious world would wonder what such a question might mean. But to ask "Is Bill Banowsky sound?" is meaningful enough, or at least it is communicative language in our ranks.

I might have spared you the ordeal of this editorial had I not been bombarded of late with this troublesome term. One journal tells me that "the only sound church" has now been planted in a certain area. An editor insists that an entire Bible department at one of our colleges is now *unsound.*

And Reuel Lemmons in the *Firm Foundation* compliments our good brother Glenn Wallace by saying: "You may not like Glenn Wallace's style, but no one, to our knowledge, has ever accused a Wallace of unsoundness." But Reuel did not say whether

any of the Wallaces had ever accused any of the Wallaces of being unsound! The sad truth is that one Wallace has not only accused his own father of unsoundness, but has attacked him publicly and in the press. But still Reuel is complimenting Glenn, and that's nice. And this helps us to understand what soundness is. Glenn Wallace is sound.

But the shot that really got me was a notice in the *Gospel Guardian* to the effect that "sound preachers" could get automobiles for a bargain in Indianapolis, and that came from another Wallace by the way. The notice gave me pause to wonder by what standard the automobile dealer would judge the preachers who might ask for the special deal. Would Glenn Wallace qualify? Reuel says Glenn is the one brother that is most certainly sound. But the Wallace in Indianapolis would say he most certainly is not. I take it, therefore, that soundness has something to do with what side you are on in our brotherhood nitpicking.

Some of us would just have to walk if we had to buy a car through brother Wallace's contact in Indianapolis. I would have been walking a long time by now, but I wonder about others whose glorious shadows still fall across our noble Movement. Would Alexander Campbell have to walk too if he lived in our day? Now it just doesn't seem to make sense that brother Wallace would turn brother Campbell away as *unsound*, but I'm afraid he would have to do just that, if not for "fellowshiping with the Baptists" then surely for being president of a missionary society. Actually nearly all the pioneers would be *unsound* for one reason or another: Barton Stone for being "soft" on immersion and for not being immersed himself; Raccoon Smith for not leaving the Baptists; J. W. McGarvey for tolerating the organ; Thomas Campbell for being a dyed-in-the-wool Calvinist; Walter Scott for fellowshiping Alexander Campbell!

Our poor pioneers, bless their hearts, there isn't a one of them that could buy a car in Indianapolis! Not only would they have to walk to church, but when they got there they could neither address the assembly or lead a prayer. Unsoundness is indeed a wretched disease. But you may be assured that when Austin or Lufkin or Nashville or Abilene is allowed to write the rules according to their own party standards the whole kit and caboodle of us are likely to show up unsound—if not today then tomorrow.

It would make interesting reading if those who sit in judgment on the soundness of brethren would state precisely what they mean by the term. What is *a sound church?* Just what makes a brother *unsound?* Or a college or a songbook?

From what we do read it may be surmised that the answer would be something like: *One is sound when he is true to the Book.* The trouble here is that everyone has his own notion of what constitutes being true to the Book. Our non-class brethren find unsoundness in those who have classes. To the "conservatives" soundness is measured primarily in terms of *liberalism*, which presently refers to congregational support of institutions more than anything else.

It hardly occurs to us that the primitive Christians must have had some other way to measure soundness than by the scriptures—the New Covenant scriptures at least—for "the Book" to them would be the *Old Testament.* They had a fresh memory of the Lord, of course, and the teachings of the apostles and their assistants, but they surely did not judge soundness by any book or any collection of scriptures. This should encourage us to cultivate a more wholesome use of this term, if indeed we must make such judgments.

I say if we must make such judgments, for it seems that we judge soundness in a way much different from that allowed in the scriptures. The term sound appears a number of times in the English Bible, but it is never used in reference to honest differences of opinion. It has more to do with one's spiritual health than with his doctrinal correctness. It is noteworthy that in all Paul's letters to the various churches with their many problems he never calls one of them *unsound.* Perhaps a congregation can be unsound or sound, but the scriptures never refer to one in such a way. Persons are sound or unsound in reference to whether they enjoy a wholesome relationship to Him who is the source of health—Jesus Christ.

The Greeks gave us our word *hygiene.* Hygeia was to them the goddess of health, being the daughter of Asclepius, who was the god of medicine and healing. When the New Covenant scriptures speak of "soundness" or "sound" it is this word that is used, which means *health* or *wholeness.* So in 2 Tim. 1:13 we read: "Follow the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." *Sound* words are words that heal the soul and make it whole.

In 1 Tim. 1:10 there is a reference to things "contrary to sound doctrine," and in 1 Tim. 6:3 it says that some "do not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ." The context shows that unsoundness is not a matter of honest differences of opinion or diversity between brethren, but that it has reference to that which is destructive to the soul. In the first passage there is mention of immorality, sodomy, murder, lying, perjury, kidnaping. In the second reference the unsound folk are "puffed with conceit, know nothing, have a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth."

Now is it not a bit extreme to label someone "unsound" who happens to differ on how missionaries or orphans are to be supported, or whether an organ may be used in singing a hymn? When we start calling liars and egotists *unsound* we will be closer to the Bible. And how about slander, dissension, envy, and a morbid craving for controversy? These are the scriptural descriptions of an unsound brother. It is tragic that a man can have such festering diseases as these and yet be "sound in the faith" since he squares with what is excepted of him in terms of doctrinal exactitude.

Henceforth when an ad appears in our papers for "a sound preacher," whether for a car at a bargain or a job with a church, let us presume to conclude that they want a Christian gentleman, one who is humble, free of envy and dissension, and one who does not care to wrangle with his brothers.

This should be our new criteria for soundness. He is one who has been kissed by the goddess Hygeia, as the Greeks would say it. His soul has been made whole by Christ, and he is thus like Him, the Prince of Peace. Envy and hate are diseases. So are pride and egoism. A man has a morbid craving for controversy because he is unwell. His soul is sick. It matters not how "sound" he may be in parroting some party line, but whether he enjoys *wholeness* by virtue of the indwelling spirit of Christ.

Let this be our standard for soundness: *a holiness of life grounded in a wholeness of devotion to Christ.* There is holiness if there is wholeness. The ideas are closely kin.

So if you or I, or Bill Banowsky or Glenn Wallace, are sound, it is because we enjoy good health in Christ. It means all is well with our soul. We are not sound because we are right on the organ question or know "the truth" about Herald of Truth or how to support orphans, but because we are nourished of our Lord and enjoy wholeness of selfhood in Him. This is the abundant life that He came to bring. This is what it means to be a new creation.

It is time that we pause and take stock. It may be our lack of wholeness (or *holiness)* that causes us to be preoccupied with judging each other on the basis of our own shibboleths. As we grow in Christ and enjoy better health spiritually we will be more inclined to judge soundness on the grounds of one's own personal relationship to his Lord. The point of our religion is to become like Christ. The more one has the mind of Christ the sounder he is; the more unlike Christ he is the unhealthier he is.

The likeness of Christ is thus our measure of soundness. Let us treat each other in such a way, both by teaching and association, that we will all day by day grow to be more like Christ, and thus become a sounder and healthier people.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: SYMBOL OF PEACE OR VIOLENCE?

He was described as a modern Moses in an editorial of a Dallas newspaper. But our own Denton paper had a different view. To its editor he was a harbinger of trouble, even in death. The opinions were just as ambivalent among my associates. To a few he was an apostle of freedom or a prophet calling his nation to repentance, while to others he was an agitator or a precursor of violence.

Among our own Church of Christ folk I fear the attitude was fairly well reflected in a letter from a professor at one of our Christian colleges, who, after referring to himself as an admirer of Martin Luther King, said: “What distresses me most is the fact that I have heard very few expressions of concern about this violent act, but a number of ‘He got what was coming to him’ remarks here on campus, especially among students.”

I would be pleased to learn that all across the nation a number of our congregations conducted memorial services for the slain civil rights leader, but I fear there will be hardly any of this.

A glorious exception was “A Journey to the Mountaintop,” a service for King held at our Christian College of the Southwest in Dallas, with both races taking part. Not only was there no such service out at Abilene Christian College, but it so happened that a Negro was on the chapel program just after the tragedy, and it was explained to the student body that this had nothing to do with what had happened at Memphis!

I hate to think that our people’s attitude is one of general indifference, or perhaps more like that of Georgia’s Gov. Maddox, (who as a business man closed his restaurant rather than serve food to a Negro), than like that of Mayor Lindsey of New York, who helped to avoid riots in his city by joining hands with Negro mourners and singing “We Shall Overcome.” We are, for the most part, a southern church, and yet our witness for Christ in reference to the cause of the deprived Negro is virtually *nil.*

Our nation has been experiencing its greatest crisis since Lincoln’s day, and yet we have contributed almost nothing at all toward a solution of the vast problems. The Churches of Christ of the south missed the opportunity of a century to do something really significant for our Lord. Jesus ministered to the untouchables of His time. His chief concern was for the down and out, the rejected, and the deprived. But we have joined the white community in its smug indifference, parroting with disdain that foolish question, “What do they want, anyway?’

We have left the task of unfurling the Christian banner to a few Negro Baptist ministers of the south, along with a handful of clergy from the north. There is now an honor roll of martyred dead, people who gave their lives in Christ’s name to make their black brothers free, but none of our names are listed there. We have shed no blood. We did not march in Selma or Memphis. We have been in no Birmingham jail. None of our church buildings have been bombed. All because we have not been in the fight. We have not sung. We have not marched. We have not even loved.

We need to look deeply into the face of our own conscience. When we look we will see that the face is black. We have sinned against Christ and the black man by not coming to his rescue when he needed us most. What a testimony it would have been if the thousands of Churches of Christ had risen as one man in support of justice to the Negro in the south. Had we done so there might never have been that tragedy in Memphis. let’s face it

honestly and penitently: the white churches of the south have failed Christ during this great urban crisis.

Martin Luther King was a symbol of a people's struggle for dignity. His death dramatized that crucible as nothing else could, and so the response across the entire earth was simply magnificent. It was as if the world had only then got the point of what was going on. The world seemed unable or unwilling to tune in on the black man's frequency until the tragic news went out from Memphis. And so there followed a flood of empathy that has no parallel in all our nation's history, hardly even in the death of a head of state. The Department of State in Washington received an avalanche of condolences from capitals around the world. Thousands of memorial services were conducted throughout the nation and the world, including even Moscow. The great and the small descended on Atlanta to take part in one of the most remarkable funerals in American history.

In the wake of King's death there was violence all across the land, an ugly memorial to his philosophy of nonviolence. The fires of violence and destruction burned in twenty American cities. Entire blocks were ablaze in Chicago and Washington. We were on the brink of a racial war. It all seemed apocalyptic.

King's civil rights movement had its origin in two sources close to my own heart. It was southern and it was Christian. It is fitting that King should emerge from the church, and it is consistent that he be a child of the south. The revolution for the black man's freedom had to begin in the south, and it is to the church's credit that one of her sons led the way.

But again I say that it grieves me that our own Churches of Christ have not been among the concerned ones. This whole urban crisis has deep religious overtones, and the tragedy in Memphis depicted as nothing else could that the issues are spiritual in nature. It was martyrdom. It was time for prayer, repentance, and soul-searching. A significant chapter of church history had been written, even in our own nation, and we of the Church of Christ had taken no part in it. The community of God is *catholic*, but we have proved ourselves now beyond all doubt to be southern white middle-class. We may have some Negro churches, but we see to it that they remain Negro churches. We assume that not only America, but the king. dam of God as well, allows for second. class citizenship.

It is not too late, of course, for us to change our way and become a catholic community, and thus concern ourselves with the problems of suffering humanity. Our Lord tells us, "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it unto me." We must make this real in our lives by becoming involved in the problems of social injustice. Our hearts must yearn for those who suffer, especially when they are at our very door.

Many among us took heart that perhaps we were at last joining the human race when Wendel Scott, a minister on the Mexican border, dared to march in protest to substandard wages and other injustices to poor farm workers. It went out over the news wires that the Latin Americans were being helped by a white Church of Christ minister. But our good brother was promptly summoned home by the prominent Highland church in Abilene and summarily dismissed from the church's payroll. He has since taken a job selling insurance. We are about as concerned with the human predicament as were those New Yorkers who watched from their comfortable apartment windows as Miss Genovese was attacked and subsequently murdered in the street below them. Oh, yes, they heard her continual cries for help as she struggled with her murderer, they conceded to police, but they did not want to become involved, not so much even as to call the police.

History will eventually make its judgment of Martin Luther King as to whether he was a man of peace or a man of violence. That judgment will be more carefully weighed than was the remark of a teacher friend who said, "He talked peace, but everywhere he went there was trouble."

We forget that changes in cultural patterns often call for agitation. Let the church realize that it must agitate society if it is to save it. Jesus caused trouble; the prophets were agitators. The church's mission is incendiary, for it disturbs easy consciences and threatens the status quo. If Martin Luther King agitated us, it might be that we needed to be agitated. He was in this respect like another Martin Luther.

But this does not mean that he encouraged violence, destruction, and killing in the streets. Gandhi agitated through nonviolence, and his success brought freedom to India. King was trying to do the same for the Negro, and he was convinced that Gandhi's philosophy would work in America. But Gandhi also had trouble keeping his followers nonviolent, and when Gandhi was assassinated in 1948 there was an outbreak of violence in India even more serious than that which followed King's death, with more than a hundred people dying in riots.

King had one problem more serious than anything faced by Gandhi, and that was that his own people were sharply divided over strategy. The likes of Rap Brown and Stokley Carmichael were crying for blood vengeance against the white man, and condemning King's method as naive and idealistic. King's losses in Harlem, Watts, and Detroit indicated that nonviolence was losing its hold on the Negro revolt. Memphis loomed as still another failure, for as he marched in behalf of garbage collectors there were violent outbreaks. He was disillusioned, and no doubt he feared that the Browns and Carmichaels would wrest from his hands the revolt that he intended as peaceful and turn it into a racial war.

So he had to return to Memphis. The next march would be peaceful. It had to be. He told his friends, “The doctrine of nonviolence is on trial in Memphis.” And so he died while testing that doctrine, which was indeed the doctrine of Christ. Unlike the case of Gandhi, it was this time tested by a follower of the Christ. This should be of great significance to those who make up His church. If a man’s methods are Christian, we should be eager for them to work. If a man’s dreams are Christian, we should be eager for them to be realized. To be unconcerned or indifferent is utterly unthinkable.

Eric Sevareid on CBS News spoke to the church as well as to the nation when he urged that we not forget the voice that cried out, “I have a dream,” nor forget the face of the widow who sat there “frozen in pain, a Madonna carved in black marble.”

Let us not forget the voice, for it is the voice of the church militant. Let us not forget the face, for it is the face of the church triumphant.—*the Editor*

Jesus told of the faith that removes mountains. May not cheerfulness in the face of difficulty and privation be an evidence of that wonderworking faith?—*John T. Faris*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

*God and Culture . . .*

## GOD ON THE STAGE

The opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities* are especially appropriate in these days of world crisis. Though written by Charles Dickens over a century ago they speak poignantly to our time, to use Ouida’s words as we read them together.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the day of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. It was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness. It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. We had everything before us, we had nothing before us. We were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.”

Dickens is pointing to the stuff that life is made of, the compounds of good and evil. The lines describe any age, which is another way of saying that every generation has its work cut out for itself. Good and evil are always in combat, with each of us choosing the side he takes, perhaps with that uneasy feeling that even when he chooses the good, evil is near at hand. Wisdom never comes in neat packages 100% pure, but is somewhat adulter-

ated by sprinklings of foolishness. Light is hard to come by, for the Darkness is always in the way. None of us deserves Heaven, for there is so much of Hell in the best of us.

We might all be more like Dickens in that he was a man of his time, a man *concerned* about the condition of the world in which he lived. He was as indifferent to history as was Henry Ford, and all of his writings, except his two historical novels, are about the generation in which he lived. Too many of us get lost in centuries past or infatuated with the promises of tomorrow. Dickens took a hard, long, critical look at his native England, and he saw darkness as well as light. And he sought to quench the darkness with the light.

His pen was more powerful than Cromwell's sword in attacking the social evils of his time. He wrote vigorously for reforms in prisons, slums, and poorhouses. He fought for pure water and free schools. He had more interest in reading Christmas stories to children than in standing in the presence of royalty. He once broke all precedents by refusing an audience with Queen Victoria, who had commanded his presence after watching him perform so excellently upon the stage. He had rather visit a prison than to be a guest at a castle.

Should we Christians of the tragic 1960's be less involved in our world? Should our concerns not go beyond our own selfish interests to the world out there with its winter of despair in hopes of bringing to it a spring of hope?

## Drama in Life of Lincoln

When Ouida and I lived in Illinois, where I taught at MacMurray College, it was our pleasure on several occasions to visit Old Salem, made famous by the fact that Abe Lincoln spent his young manhood running a store there. The little village has been restored to the way it was when the great emancipator lived there, and you must be sure to see it if ever you are in those parts. We noticed on our visits that "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" was performed there during the summer months, a delightful play by Robert E. Sherwood, but we never saw it.

But recently Ouida and I were reading from this play and we were touched by the scene where Abe Lincoln prays for a dying boy. His parents had asked for a preacher, but there was none within miles of Salem. A friend suggested that Abe might say a prayer, but Abe hesitated, supposing that he could say nothing that would help.

The scene is tense with the question of slavery and the threat it posed to the very survival of the young nation. Friends in Illinois were going west to Oregon, but there was fear that the newer states of the west would be slave states. Abe was disturbed, expressing his fear that the politicians in Washington would sell out the whole west piece by piece to the slave traders. Could the United States survive such a tragedy?

The parents of the sick boy became frightened, for he had grown worse. Abe Lincoln volunteered to pray for him. The prayer has special significance in that Robert Sherwood intended that it be a prayer for a dying nation as well as a dying boy. As the playwright puts it: "The prayer which Lincoln gives for a sick boy is, in effect, a prayer for the survival of the United States of America."

It seems especially appropriate that we study that prayer now that our nation faces its greatest peril since Lincoln's time.

> "Oh God, the Father of all living, I ask You to look with gentle mercy upon this little boy who is here, lying sick in this covered wagon. His people are traveling far to seek a new home in the wilderness, to do Your work, God, to make this earth a good place for Your children to live in.
>
> "They can see clearly where they're going, and they're not afraid to face all the perils that lie along the way. I humbly beg You not to take their child from them. Grant him the freedom of life. Do not condemn him to the imprisonment of death. Do not deny him his birthright.
>
> "Let him know the sight of great plains and high mountains, of green valleys and wide rivers. For this little boy is an American, and these things belong to him, and he to them. Spare him, that he too may strive for the ideal for which his fathers have labored, so faithfully and so long. Spare him and give him his father's strength give us all strength, oh God, to do the work that is before us. I ask you this favor in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ, who died upon the Cross to set men free. Amen."

## Remaking the World

My dear Ouida and I were also profoundly impressed by reading a condensed version of *They're Out to Remake the World* by Clarence W. Hall. It is the story of Dr. Frank Buchman and his Moral-ReArmament organization, which has done fabulous things toward the unity of all mankind. Buchman was a Lutheran minister who was disenchanted with the thought of spending his life preaching sermons to church members. He wanted to go out and change the world. This was in the 1920's. When he died in 1961 the Prime Minister of New Zealand said of him: "He has done as much as any man to unite the peoples of the world by cutting through prejudices of color, class and creed." At his death 22 heads of state eulogized him, and during his life eight nations had decorated him.

It was Frank Buchman who pled with us all to "Expect great things from God," and to "Attempt great things for God." He himself did both by believing that religion is the most revolutionary force in the world, and that nations can be changed by changing the men who govern them. His guiding principle thus became: *nations must be governed by men governed by God.*

Armed with this conviction he set Out to reconcile those who were torn by strife, bickering and dissension, whether it be on the national level, between management and labor, or within a family. But he realized that if he were to bring reconciliation to the distraught he himself must be right with God. He thus set aside a "quiet time" each day to seek the guidance of God and to search his own soul. "Since God gave man two ears and one mouth, He must have meant us to listen at least twice as much as we talk," he told his followers. He looked to the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount for his directive, finding there "Four Absolutes" that were to be his moral message to the nations of the world. They are: *honesty, purity, unselfishness, love.*

His first great victory was in Norway, a nation paralyzed by a severe depression and by political and religious factions. Buchman and his coworkers traveled over the country from one end to the other, teaching the Four Absolutes. Their secret of success was in bringing together the various factions and encouraging them to listen to each other. Soon the spirit of Norway began to change because the men who governed the nation began to change. He moved on to other nations, attacking the most entrenched hatreds and prejudices. He was convinced that "he who changes hate changes history."

Buchman taught the leaders of the world that *Sorry* is a magic word, and this was magnificently illustrated in a meeting between the Japanese and Filipinos, between whom bitterness was most intense after the second World War. When the senior member of the Japanese Diet tried to address the leaders in Manila in a Buchman-sponsored effort, he was shouted down with angry hoots. But again he tried, and finally he was able to say to them:

"My government has asked me to tell you that Japan must and will pay reparations—in full. But reparations are not enough. First of all, we must sincerely apologize for the past and humbly ask your forgiveness."

The audience was struck dumb by this admission. *Sorry* was indeed a magic word. The Fillipinos, who moments before were filled with hatred, now burst forth in thunderous applause. Many pressed forward to shake hands. Some wept. One Filipino said to his Japanese brother: "These wrists of mine will always bear the marks of Japanese handcuffs, but tonight I have forgiven you."

But Dr. Buchman was as concerned for a family divided as for a nation divided. A taxi driver in Lima, Peru, was so impressed by Buchman's interest in him as a person that he offered to serve as his chauffeur during his stay in the city. Between engagements Buchman went to the cabbie's home and helped in untangling several longstanding problems.

Dr. Buchman's Moral Re-Armament organization believes that the real issue today is between those who believe that God made man and can change him, and those who believe that man made God and can abolish Him. The organization now has 3,000 workers the world over, and none receive a salary. Only expenses are paid. Each is self-supported

or supported by friends or a church. This was part of Buchman's philosophy from the very beginning, that those who seek to reconcile men must be utterly dependent on God. He saw this as characteristic of the early church, which had so impressed him that the MRA was first called "First Century Christian Fellowship."

Buchman called this "gambling on God"—trusting that He will give one the means to do His will. And Buchman has gambled fiercely, spending thousands of dollars he did not have in order to sponsor some project. The money always came in. In 1964 alone the MRA spent two and a half million in projects designed to unite that which is divided. In 1966 they founded a college, Mackinac College in Michigan, a four-year liberal-arts institution with an aim of training young people for world leadership.

Ouida and I were edified by all this. We agreed that we sometimes find more of the spirit of Christ in the world than we do the church, and far more concern for the problems that cause pain and misery. This also strengthened our belief in the basic goodness of man. We remain optimists in a world that is far, far too mysteriously evil, *chastened* optimists perhaps, but optimists just the same.—*the Editor*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

## MOTHER'S CHICKS

*By F. I. Lemley*

Vance Packard in his book, STATUS SEEKERS, points out that we people are somewhat like chickens in that we develop a well defined "pecking order" and each seems to know instinctively just whom he can peck without fear of sudden retribution. This is likewise true of animals and many times we have observed a small cow with sharp horns occupying the doorway to large shelter, keeping the whole herd out in the storm.

One of the cherished memories of childhood is that of watching my mother tend her incubator in the cellar. In the early morning the sun came through the door just right to provide light for turning and candling the eggs. It was my privilege as a boy to watch many times as the chicks pipped the eggs and laboriously worked their ways out of the shells. The little wet chick would tumble, fall and scramble over his unhatched brothers until he found the light in front of the tray. Soon he was dry and fluffy and as uniform with the other little leghorns as peas in a pod.

Sometimes later, as the chicks developed, trouble would arise. On some rare occasions little Bill (to dramatize the story) would find some defect either real or imaginary on the back of little Jimmy and immediately call attention to it by giving Jimmy a hefty peck. Other brothers attracted by the sudden activity would join gleefully in the dubious business

of removing little Jimmy's defect. Sometimes the process would continue until one would draw blood. This in turn attracted many others who joined in the chase until eventually little Jimmy would be found lying in a corner bleeding and with his innards exposed. While all this was going on, perhaps there would be nearby a number of adult chickens congregated around a wise old rooster who stood nonchalantly by with a gleam in his eye, head held high, and chuckling as roosters do. On reflection I think I can hear this wise old rooster saying, "You know, specks and spots are dangerous things. Once a fellow gets one of them there is no end to where it may lead him! Another thing, One should never bleed when he is wounded for blood attracts too much attention!" I'm sure I have correctly determined the meaning of the gleam in his eye. It was a "Sorry-son-but-we-have-to-keep-the-flock-pure" look.

Later in my youth as I attended a small country school, I saw a very similar thing happen on a more sophisticated level among boys. One boy was a bit different from the rest, so much so that he became the butt of *jokes*, the object of mischief done, and the recipient of all sorts of inhumane treatment from his fellows. He seemed to be at the bottom of the "pecking order". One day during recess while the teachers were well out of hearing distance, some of the school bullies removed this boy's shoes forcibly, and taking some strong cord they hanged "ole Lofton" from the rafters of the coal bin by his big toes. They were oblivious to his pleadings for mercy and his cries of pain. The onlookers, of whom I was one, in the face of the size of the bullies and their mischievous disposition, melt helpless to render any constructive assistance to the abused. Some of us did tell the teacher but he couldn't do anything about it for the reason that his information was second hand, and too, it was a sort of 'Your-word-against-mine" situation. Seeing that some of the guilty boys were sons of school board members and prominent community families, the teacher prudently decided not to hazard his bread and butter by upsetting the status quo. He decided to "go slow" and allow time to take care of the situation.

As I have grown older and more observing, again and again similar atrocities have been observed on a yet more sophisticated level in churches. This is not confined to anyone church, but the same processes work in not only churches of Christ but others. People are still somewhat like chickens in spite of our religion and sophistication. Because of this uncontrolled bent of human nature, many honest and sincere brethren striving to "keep the flock pure" have attempted to remove a speck from their brother's eye and as a result have begun a "pecking process" that not only removed the speck but removed the brother. If a brother does survive such a "Spot-removing" process many times the scars and wounds are so deep that they never completely heal. While this spot removing process is going on many who should be wise enough to prevent the damage take a neutral position and justify themselves by saying, "Too bad! Too bad! But we have to keep the flock pure, you know!" Some are heard to say, "That only goes to prove that once a man

begins to "weaken" and begins to question the faith of the fathers (one generation removed) there is no end to where he may end up!"

Most of such comments are no more than rationalizations that miss the point of the trouble entirely. As this scribe sees it, there may be several alternatives in answer to the real problem. First, one may by God's grace develop such a disposition that he can submit to crucifixion gracefully and like Jesus pray for his tormentors. This is admirable! There is always the possibility that one may become so calloused that he becomes insensitive so that he may refuse to bleed when wounded. It is not good for one to become insensitive to his fellows and to the needs of those about him. Forbid the thought, but one might surrender his own mind to the local "hierarchy" in such a situation, but this would be detestable. Or perhaps those who are so bent on "spot-removing" might possibly be taught to be more tolerant.

If such could be persuaded to reexamine their own position, great results might be experienced. But usually the man with a "log" in his own eye, and who doesn't know it, may be quite intolerant of specks in the eyes of his brethren. Such seem to be the most stubborn and the most zealous about keeping the flock pure. Even a remote suggestion that they should reexamine their own beliefs is repulsive to them for as some say "Everybody knows that this has been right for years and any question on this point is unthinkable." Those who talk loudest and longest about UNITY and who have the pat answers on how it is to be accomplished by all coming to God's Word, the Bible, and all accepting exactly what it says, etc., etc., are most usually the ones who differ the most widely on interpretations and hold most stubbornly to human traditions. When a man cannot distinguish between God's Word and his own interpretation of God's Word he is in bad shape. Strange as it may seem the brotherhood is filled with preachers who are otherwise intelligent and above reproach who cannot distinguish the difference in the SEED OF THE KINGDOM and the MILK and MEAT OF THE WORD. These are two different categories of scripture and serve two different functions entirely. One begets spiritual life, and the other sustains life after it is produced.

Another way of trying to solve the pecking problem is to fly the coop if you are a chicken or leave the church if you are a nonconformist. Many have tried this solution in self defense and never have they been accepted for what they really are. Usually they are falsely accused by their brethren of being turncoats, traitors to the cause, insincere opportunists who have no convictions. The path of the nonconformist is about as rugged as that of the transgressor (Prov. 13:15). Paul warned about the dangers of biting and devouring one another (Gal. 5:15).

As long as the world shall stand there are going to be brethren who think ahead of the herd, who love to explore, who love mental gymnastics and who will not surrender their minds to any but Christ. There has never been nor will there ever be a uniformity of

interpretation of scripture. Such need not be for us to have the UNITY for which Christ prayed. The sooner we learn these things the sooner the situation will improve. God has made provisions for differences of human judgment. Our problem is to learn that our own human judgment is not God's Holy Word. Unity of interpretation can never be achieved in the field of human judgment. To illustrate, if God said "Farmer Jones has 100 head of livestock!" That is God's word. But if God said, "Farmer Jones has 50 sheep, 30 cows, 19 pigs and one dog", and leaves it to us to arrive at a sum total, the sum total, right or wrong, is human judgment. Any time we have to go through a process of human reasoning to arrive at a conclusion, the conclusion may be correct or it may be incorrect but it is human judgment! All our brotherhood issues fall in the area of human judgment for all depend upon the fine art of human reasoning. God has made provisions for errors in this department.

It is refreshing to read and hear of efforts between estranged brethren to come to a better understanding of one another by discussion together. Several attempts have been made to reestablish communication with some success. This is commendable! Some are trying to discuss the issues long enough and in the spirit of inquiry and tolerance so that all may come to the same conclusions and thus end specific divisions. They are following their convictions that all must agree in order to unite. They will not have gone far until they discover that this process will take an eternity. Where two or more disagree and must come to agreement it is quite obvious that one or both must capitulate, abdicate, or compromise his present position. If the principals in such discussion sincerely but unconsciously occupy the throne of God as most factionist do, neither can afford to condescend to his brother. With this system, SOMETHING has to give! That something may be one's integrity, his doctrine, his conscience, or his intolerance of difference. It is literally impossible to bring all the brethren to the same degree of growth, knowledge, and degree of faith at the same instant. And if this is not done, then someone must arbitrarily select the issues on which we MUST agree and those on which we may tolerate disagreement.

If brethren could be caused to realize that our UNITY in Christ is in our FAITH and not in our interpretation of the Book (Bible), then we might eventually come to see that differences are not only inevitable but desirable. They serve a good purpose! It should be noted that all of us believe in the same identical Christ and have all surrendered our hearts and lives to him in obedience to the extent of our knowledge and ability. Yet our individual faith differs in intensity, our knowledge may span the whole spectrum of the known, and our abilities may differ beyond comparison. No one can learn from another who does not know more than he knows, and as long as Christians grow in grace and knowledge there of necessity must be differences. Differences provide exercise for our growth and spiritual health.

Now, the job of unifying the brethren would be simple if all could be convinced that if we ever have unity we must have it in DIVERSITY. We can and do have uniformity of doctrine and practice in the SEED department. We all have faith in the same Christ and all surrender to the same Bible Authority, having determined to obey Christ to the extent of our knowledge and ability. This is all the uniformity the Lord ever has expected or required. In the MILK and MEAT department our taste may differ, our digestion may vary, and our preparation process may differ. God expects this, for this is the area of Human Judgment. Our unity is therefore in the processes of reproduction and not in the cooking and digestion processes. Some people seem to like raw meat, burned toast, and hard eggs. Others are a *bit* more refined in their taste for spiritual food.

Realizing these things, our issues over cups, classes, cooperation, instrumental music etc., cease to be matters of life or death unless one's conscience becomes involved so that his spiritual system requires his food prepared in this way. We must allow our brethren the privilege of holding diverse views and satisfying their own conscience on matters of human reasoning, logic, and interpretation of God's word. None of our divisive brotherhood issues have anything to do with our becoming children of God, therefore should have nothing to do with our brotherhood unity. I have no control over who may become my brother as God regulates this. Once a man is my brother in Christ I have no right to be more demanding of him than God who received him, and if God received him while he embraced a defect and intended to practice it, then I must receive him as God has received me and my brother, in spite of our defects.

This is essentially the solution set forth in Romans 14 and unless we learn the lesson we are forever doomed to the life of a chicken, pecking and abusing, ever learning but never being able to discover truth. Once we learn these things, brotherhood issues fade into a position of that which can be tolerated, and cease to occupy a position of grave importance as matters of life or death.

---

F. L. Lemley is one of the ministers of the Wheat Ridge Heights Church of Christ, 5925 W. 32nd Ave., Denver, Colorado 80212.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

## FINDING THE WORD

TERENCE E. JOHNSON

I occasionally wonder, "Have we lost a sense of God's word?" Do we hear, in any appreciable and significant way, the word of God in our time? in our lives? in our churches? Of course, the Bible is still a basic resource book for sermons, church school

classes, and other church-related activities. But is this *really* significant to us? Does it have anything to do with what we do most of the time?

Until we come to grips with some dynamic concept of the word of God speaking to us, we shall be an anachronism in society, a cultural parenthesis.

The Bible clearly does not speak to many people today—in and out of the Church. Reacting against literalism, many reject it altogether. It is unfortunate that often *our* attitudes prohibit honest, searching people from discovering the relevance and vitality of the biblical witness. Perhaps we are sometimes afraid to approach the scriptures with sheer honesty. Perhaps we feel that our ideas will seem untenable (or even foolish) when exposed to an intelligent reading of scripture.

Yet there must be in the fellowship of the Church a context within which the continuing quest for truth and meaning can be experienced. In fact, the Church itself must be a part of that quest! To recover its sense of identity and mission, it must turn again to the biblical witness. A part of the whole Church's ministry, as well as the preacher's, was stated well by Harold Martin in *Post* magazine:

> . . . to make the Scriptures meaningful to individual men and women whose inner resources have been drained away by the emptiness and shallowness of their daily lives. (April 24, 1965, p. 22)

The "word of God" for our time will be a fresh and contemporary word; it may be different than that to which our Fathers responded in the original Restoration movements and in the first half of the twentieth century. The climate of our age compels us to seek interpretive biblical bases for our life and mission as a "people of God." For example, we are beginning to see that the eighth century Ethical Prophets are particularly relevant to our ministry today. And other biblical emphases come to light out of our search to find God's word in the midst of crucial concerns. But we must cast off the shackles of nineteenth-century interpretations and see that the scriptures speak *with freshness* to the '60's.

The Bible must come alive for us! It is the charter of our Christian beginnings. It is the charter of our freedom. It reveals the heart, the very center, of the thrust of our mission. It relates to our concerns and problems and needs and desires. Increasingly, people—as they cast off the shackles of tradition—are discovering that the Bible is not out of date, and that it casts fresh light on their own situations.

We can see ourselves, our churches, our society's struggles in the Bible. Ernest Harrison of Canada suggests that once a person is "permitted" to read the Bible freely,

> he has on his hands a pulsing, living reality; not just a pious collection of religious lore, but a reality which moves beyond the bounds of the Church or the Faith. For we are in the presence of a surge of human love and beauty, cruelty and dismay, close relations and cruel separations, the force of the sexual

> act and the fear which pervades it, the magnificence of God and His meanness, His fierce truth and the petty acts of which He Himself repents, thoughtless giving and divine taking, soaring wisdom and pedestrian drivel, rounded organ music and shrill pipe, high philosophy and dogged literalism, heavy restrictions and unremitting freedoms, wit and boredom, priest and prophet faith and unfaith—life itself. *(The Restless Church,* p. 29)

True, it takes some insight and imagination and faith; but if we do not approach the Bible with these prerequisites, we shall continue to be tied to the pier of obsolescence and irrelevancy. As a people of God we dare not! We must pull up the anchor, let our sails be filled with the winds of the spirit, and move into adventurous (and sometimes tumultuous) seas of God.

The Bible can become extremely relevant for out time (and sometimes painfully relevant) . Yet we of a "people of the Book" tradition are too often carrying the cumbersome prohibitions and interpretations that make the Bible an object of worship or a proof-texting collection to win arguments. We must learn to see the scripture in its historical context and then creatively relate it to our current age.

Amos' situation can be a very incisive "word of God" today. But if we merely use the fifth chapter to condemn the use of instrumental music in worship, we have not only become totally irrelevant to our society and our age, but have been guilty of *profound irresponsibility* in our use of the text!

The "creation theology" of Genesis can become a very meaningful context describing the creative one-God whose nature was sublimely and beautifully affirmed, and a significant theological concept of the active, dynamic God who is constantly involved in creation. But if we use Genesis 1 to engage in scientific harangues about the number of twenty-four hour periods during creation, we miss the point and again misuse the Bible which is not a text book on science.

The Bible's message can illumine our minds—if we allow it to speak to us! It can teach us that God's word—present in scripture, present in many and sometimes unusual ways—*is* "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword . . . , discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Amos 8:11-14 describes a great famine: the loss of God's word. The prophet predicted that in the fact of God's silence men would realize their need: their need for the prophetic word. In desperation they would seek "from sea to sea, they shall run to and fro, from the north to the east, seeking the Word of the Lord." Perhaps our question today is: Shall our experience be the loss of God's word? shall we be able to discern and interpret the prophetic word?

Living in a time of outward prosperity and a time of social injustices (similar to the time of Amos), we must hear the prophetic word. There is a vital prophetic voice in the Church today. We often squelch it. We frighten our ministers into subjection and they're in "fear and trembling" when they prepare even the mildest sermons with prophetic proclamations. (After all, who controls the money with which the preachers and their families are clothed and fed?)

There is a vital prophetic voice *in the world of the arts today*. We don't usually squelch this: we are oblivious to it! We act as if it didn't exist! Yet the writings of novelists and playwrights, the music of composers, and paintings of artists are speaking to our age, are relating to society the problems and concerns that are real in our lives—the problems and concerns which the Church must confront.

The prophetic voice can be heard in many unlikely places today; the word of God is being translated into many expressions. Yet we are too prone to place our fallible judgments on an infallible God. We act as if we fully know where He is, when He speaks, how He speaks, and to whom He speaks! But God is far beyond our proscriptions. Thomas à Kempis, in his "Of Reading the Holy Scriptures," said, "God speaks to us in many ways." The Christian's faith is in a presence alive and at work in creation and recreation, renewing His world.

The word to the Pilgrim Fathers when they departed Holland is appropriate for us: *The Lord hath more light and truth yet to break forth out of his holy word.*

---

Terrence Johnson is minister to the Valley Forge Church of Christ, Valley Forge, Pa.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

## BOOK NOTES

*The Vietnam War: Christian Perspectives* is one of those books that judges the conscience. It is the kind of book that we owe it to ourselves to read in these critical times. It is a collection of provocative essays by controversial figures. There is Martin Luther King's address at Riverside Church, Richard Reeves' account of his trip to Hanoi, William Sloane Coffin's (one of those now indicted for conspiracy) address in Washington Cathedral. 3.50 hardcover, 1.65 in paperback.

A highly readable volume that illustrates how religion can get out on the streets where the people are is *Christians in Crossfire,* written by L. P. Byers, a Presbyterian minister who worked from a motorcycle in order to gain new opportunities for Christian witness.

This book shows that some people are doing things for Christ and not just talking about it. The chapter titles indicate the dynamism: *Intellectual Whitewash*, *On the Griddle*, *Fire and Fog*, *Fighting Windmills* are just a few. He points out how faith can exit at the bottom of the heart, but denies at the top of the mind. And many more challenging ideas. 2.25 in paperback.

*The World of the New Testament* is the initial volume of an extended commentary of the New Testament issued by Sweet Publishing Co. While we think it unfortunate that the opportunity was not seized to make this labor of love the cooperative effort of conservative scholars from all wings of our Movement, we nonetheless praise the venture and heartily urge our readers to acquaint themselves with it. Indeed, if some of the more scholarly writers among both Disciples and Independent Christian Churches, or perhaps just the latter if a strong conservative image is important, could have been called into this noble task, it would have resulted in a more solid work and could have witnessed to our growing concern for unity. As it is they will all be Church of Christ men, which means, due to our lack of depth in scholarship, they will be the younger set, for the most part. While all this could have been better balanced, we like it as it is. This first volume, edited by Abraham J. Malherbe, discusses the life, history, geography, and religions of Palestine at the time of Christ, with an article by Roy Bowen Ward on “How to Study the New Testament.” The one by Ward is not only a responsible piece of work, but a daring departure from the old-line Church of Christ technique of Bible study. It is the kind of article that may cause the axes to start flying again. Perhaps you’d better try this first volume and see how you take to it. Only 3.50.

Again we call your attention to *Are You Going to Church More but Enjoying it Less* by Gary Freeman, which is only 2.95 in paperback. This dynamic volume may well be a new beginning in responsible journalism for Church of Christ folk. Mr. Freeman doesn’t say things as they’ve always been said in such chapters as “Can we all understand the Bible alike?” and “Standards and characteristics of a sect.” That this book still is ignored by the Church of Christ press, though issued by one of our houses (a more daring one), is a commentary on the need for us to continue our efforts for reform. This book is, to be sure, part of the reformatory effort, and it will encourage you to believe that there is still hope for us.

Robert Meyers’ “Can We Understand?”, which appeared last month, has been issued as a reprint, but our supply quickly ran out. We are printing more, so you may still take advantage of the low price of 12 for 1.00 or 100 for 5.00. This can be an important contribution toward easing racial prejudice among our people, and this is something we can all do. But please order at once.

The piece in this issue on Martin Luther King by the editor was already in type when Prof. Meyers' essay arrived. We thought it so important that we wanted it issued without delay, so we held up the one we are running this time. We would appreciate your comments on this sensitive subject. In the next issue we are going to publish comments from our readers, *pro* and *con.* So let us hear from you.

All of us need more humor in our lives, and the book by Elton Trueblood on *The Humour of Christ* will help us in that direction. His treatment of Jesus' use of irony and his chapter on the strategy of laughter will interest you. 1.50 in paperback from England.

We recommend for your children *The Child's Story Bible.* It is sturdily bound and beautifully illustrated. It is out in a new edition and greatly improved. 6.50.

## UNITY MEETING AT SCC

Again we remind you of the Third Annual Unity Forum to be held at Southeastern Christian College, Winchester, Ky.

Perry Gresham, president of Bethany College, will be keynote speaker, followed by representatives from several wings of the Restoration Movement.

Sessions begin 8:00 p.m., July 5. Write to LaVern Houtz, SCC, Winchester, Ky., for complete program and other information.

We suggest this as an ideal family venture. Prices are very reasonable.

*Things That Matter Most,* the bound volume for 1967, will soon be ready to be mailed. If you have not yet ordered your copy, we urge you to do so at once at the low price of only 3.00. This volume matches *Resources of Power,* which is the 1966 edition of *Restoration Review,* also available at 3.00.

Let us remind you that you can receive this journal for only $1.00 a year or six names for only $3.00.

RESTORATION REVIEW, *1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201

* Current Contact Information:
Leroy Garrett, 1300 Woodlake Drive, Denton, TX 76205
leroy.ouida@worldnet.att.net

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly (except July and August) at 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas. Leroy Garrett, Editor. Second class permit at Denton, Texas. Subscription rate is $1.00 per annum; 50 cents in clubs of 6 or more.

*Address all mail to:* 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.*